

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A communication system for accessing and managing a
2 database, comprising:

3 a portable wireless communication appliance;
4 a remote device with access to the database; and
5 a cache device configured to communicate wirelessly with
6 the portable wireless communication appliance and to
7 communicate with the remote device, the cache device storing a
8 copy of a predetermined portion of the database.

1 2. The communication system of claim 1 wherein the
2 portable wireless communication appliance comprises one of a
3 radiotelephone, a personal digital assistant, or a portable
4 computer.

1 3. The communication system of claim 1 wherein the
2 remote device comprises a personal computer, a desktop
3 computer, or a server device connected to a network.

1 4. The communication system of claim 1 wherein the
2 cache device comprises:
3 a storage device for storing the copy of the portion of
4 the database;

5 a data processor operative to execute preprogrammed
6 instructions and managing the copy of the portion of the
7 database in the storage device; and

8 a wireless communication device operative to communicate
9 with the portable wireless communication device.

1 5. A method of accessing and managing a database
2 accessible by a remote device, the method comprising:

3 establishing a wireless communication link between a
4 portable wireless communication appliance and a cache device
5 storing a portion of the database;

6 sending a remote-device discovery inquiry by way of the
7 wireless communication link;

8 determining if the remote device is available for
9 communication with the cache device; and

10 accessing the copy of the portion of the database stored
11 in the cache device when the remote device is not available.

1 6. The method of claim 5 further comprising accessing
2 the database when the remote device is available.

1 7. The method of claim 5 further comprising setting
2 cache-device preferences when the remote device is available.

1 8. The method of claim 5 further comprising monitoring
2 the availability of the remote device.

1 9. The further comprising of claim 8 further comprising
2 synchronizing the copy of the portion of the database with the
3 database according to the cache-device preferences prior to
4 the unavailability of the remote device.

1 10. A computer program product embodied on a tangible
2 storage medium, the program comprising executable instructions
3 that enable a system to:

4 establish a wireless communication link between a
5 portable wireless communication appliance and a cache device
6 storing a portion of a database;

7 send a remote-device discovery inquiry by way of the
8 wireless communication link;

9 determine if a remote device having access to the
10 database is available for communication with the cache device;
11 and

12 access the copy of the portion of the database stored in
13 the cache device when the remote device is not available.

1 11. The computer program product of claim 10 further
2 comprising executable instructions to access the database when
3 the remote device is available.

1 12. The computer program product of claim 10 further
2 comprising executable instructions to set cache-device
3 preferences when the remote device is available.

1 13. The computer program product of claim 12 further
2 comprising executable instructions to monitor the availability
3 of the remote device.

1 14. The computer program product of claim 13 further
2 comprising executable instructions to synchronize the copy of
3 the portion of the database with the database according to the
4 cache-device preferences prior to the unavailability of the
5 remote device.

1 15. A method comprising:
2 establishing a wireless communication link between a
3 portable wireless communication appliance and a cache device;
4 sending a remote-device discovery inquiry by way of the
5 wireless communication link;
6 determining if a remote device is available for
7 communication with the cache device;
8 setting cache-device preferences when the remote device
9 is available;
10 monitoring the availability of the remote device; and
11 synchronizing a copy of a portion of a database stored in
12 the cache device with the database stored in the remote device
13 according to the cache-device preferences prior to the
14 unavailability of the remote device.

1 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising accessing
2 the copy of the portion of the database stored in the cache
3 device when the remote device is not available.